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6-CTT
WAF
6-PM

DATE: October 12, 1951

Europe
(Middle
East Command)

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS:

M. Robert Luc, French Foreign Office
Mr. Michael Rose, British Foreign Office
Mr. William Baxter, American Embassy, Ankara
Mr. John Ferguson, Policy Planning Staff,
Department of State

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Prior to the opening of the discussions with the Turkish authorities M. Luc, Mr. Rose and I met to discuss the situation. I had been in Ankara for two days and M. Luc had been there one day. Mr. Rose had just arrived in the morning.

I told them that I was convinced from what I had learned from our Embassy and military representatives in Turkey that the Turks were not prepared to make commitments with respect to details of the Middle East Command until their relations with NATO bodies, including the NATO Command, were satisfactorily developed. I did not think it was a case of being able to persuade the Turks to join the MEC by gimmicks such as Turkish membership in the Middle East Standing Group or a Turkish ground command for the whole of the Middle East. In fact I thought the idea of a Turkish ground command outside of Turkey would have the opposite effect because the Turks would think we were trying to increase their responsibilities and put them in a position where they would have to permit the use of their forces throughout the area. M. Luc said he was sure this was the case also and so far as Turkish membership on the Middle East Standing Group was concerned, this would be wholly impossible for the French to accept.

I explained

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-2-

I explained to Mr. Rose that I thought the Turks were looking at the realities of the situation; that they could see that nothing was presently being added to the strength of the Middle East by the establishment of a command except their own Turkish forces. I said that my impression was that the Turks were interested in two things: (1) a continued flow of supplies and equipment to Turkey directly from the U.S. and not through a Middle East Command or any other channel; and (2) logistic support for Turkey, in the event of trouble, from naval and air forces of NATO in order to protect the Straits and provide air support for Turkish ground forces. The Turks do not believe that the Middle East Command could supply this support but that the Eisenhower command through Carney's forces would be able to do so.

It seemed to me important to recognize that mere prestige was by no means the only element in the picture so far as the Turks were concerned; the realities of the military strength in the Middle East and in Eisenhower's southern command were more important. I said that I personally felt something could be worked out so that the Turks would have a relationship with Carney's command satisfactory to them, but I doubted whether the three generals were in a position for the moment to propose this, since the various responsibilities in the Eastern Mediterranean had been left open by the Standing Group.

M. Luc said that the people in the French Embassy had advised him along similar lines with respect to the Turkish feeling that they would have to participate in some satisfactory way in Eisenhower's command before they would be willing to agree to participation in a Middle East Command. He also indicated his agreement with my statement of the major concern of the Turks.

Mr. Rose was not entirely happy about the conversation since he had arrived hoping the Turks could be persuaded to agree in detail now on Standing Group proposals, but he said he realized this might not be possible. I pointed out that the Turks had already agreed in general to establishment of the Middle East Command and had agreed to an approach to Egypt but that it seemed very doubtful whether they would go further at the present.

S/P:JHFerguson:hh
Oct. 22, 1951

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-3-

October 14, 1951

In a later conversation with Mr. Rose on Sunday afternoon when the talks had been concluded, he indicated that he was very much upset that so few specific issues had been dealt with in the conversations. He doubted whether the Turks understood what was contemplated with respect to their relationship with the Standing Group of NATO and thought perhaps if they did understand this relationship they would not be so concerned about participation in a Middle East Command. He also wondered whether they realized that they would not be required to send forces outside Turkey unless they agreed to do so. He did not think this point had been dealt with very fully in the presentation of the three generals. Finally, he was upset that the Turks still insisted upon full participation in a NATO command and that it had been decided by the generals to defer discussion of the details of the Middle East Command as a result of the obvious Turkish reluctance to make present commitments with respect to the Middle East. He said that Field Marshal Slim had, he understood, asked that there be a final meeting with the Turks Sunday evening and that he wondered whether it would not be useful to prepare a paper which the generals would leave with the Turks and which could provide a basis for fuller understanding by the Turks of what was involved in the Standing Group proposals. He felt that the Turks might need something to study so that they could ask questions. He was afraid that any Turkish general sent to Washington for discussions with the Standing Group would have his hands so tied that he would not be of much use and the Turks in Ankara would not fully understand what was being proposed.

I told Mr. Rose I thought it would be impossible for us to prepare any paper which could be agreed to in the course of Sunday afternoon prior to the departure of the generals on Monday morning, and, in any case, I doubted the wisdom of working on such a paper at this time.

Mr. Rose felt that it was too bad that the generals could not remain an additional day or so in order that the points which had been left uncovered could be exposed. (There was a final meeting Sunday evening between the generals and the Turkish officials but General Bradley told me that no new points were developed at that meeting.)

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